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Allegiances

Lotusclan

Leader

Ashstar - Large dark gray she-cat with green eyes

Deputy

Leaftree- Yellow spotted tabby tom with green eyes

Medicine Cat

Quailjump- Dark blue she-cat with light blue points and a black muzzle

Warriors (toms and she-cats without kits)

Bounceheart- Long-legged ginger she-cat

Onemist- Light gray she-cat with one blue eye and one green eye

Sandyburr- Light ginger tom with amber eyes
Apprentice: Cloverpaw

Raggedspeck- White dappled tom with ragged fur
Apprentice: Vinepaw

Sunheart- Light ginger tabby tom with amber eyes

Nightflower- Black she-cat with vivid green eyes

Yelloweyes- Dark gray and white tom-cat with yellow eyes
Apprentice: Harepaw

Swiftfall- White she-cat with a black face and tail

Cloudleap- White and gray she-cat with green eyes

Goldenfeather- Yellow tabby tom with vivid green eyes

Deerdapple- Light brown she-cat with white spots on her back
Apprentice: Freezepaw

Bluestep- Dark gray tom with lighter bluish-gray paws

Lionroar - Golden-yellow tom with bright amber eyes

Apprentices (more than six moons old, in training to become warriors)

Cloverpaw- Cream and white tabby with green eyes

Vinepaw- Black tom-cat with white stripes and green eyes

Freezepaw - Ginger and white she-cat with icy blue eyes

Harepaw - Tawny she-cat with emerald green eyes

Queens (she-cats expecting or nursing kits)

Speckfeather- mottled white she-cat with amber eyes

Elders (former warriors and queens, now retired)

Owleyes- Tabby tom with large, once sharp-sighted, eyes

Paleflower- once pretty light gray she-cat

Half-foot- Half crippled she-cat with a bright ginger pelt

Chapter One

A roar of cheers erupted from the clan. It sounded like a giant lion, growling in triumph. Three she-cat's stood on a large, jutting ledge. The two youngest stood with their chest's puffed out, excitement and pride in their eyes. The larger of the two seemed ready to burst.

"FREEZEPAW! HAREPAW!" The clan cheered. Freezepaw, the larger, ginger and white she-cat, searched the crowd. Looking for a familiar set of pelts. There! Her family. Her mother, Cloudleap, and her father, Sunheart, looked up at them with pride sparkling in their eyes. Next to them, sat their older brother, Lionroar. Their entire family were respected warriors, each having earned their place in the clan. Freezepaw hoped to do the same.

"Freezepaw," Ashstar, the large gray leader continued, "Your mentor shall be Deerdapple." The she-cat turned to face the young fawn warrior. "Deerdapple, you have shown acceptional courage and patience, I hope you will pass this onto your new apprentice." The bi-colored apprentice fought back a squeal as she leaped from the ledge, enthusiastically touching noses with her new mentor.

"I can't wait to train! I'm gonna be the best warrior! The very best!" Freezepaw squealed quietly.

"Hold on there tiger," Deerdapple purred, "Be respectful of your sister. We will discuss training after." Freezepaw realized Ashstar was announcing the mentor of her sister, Harepaw. She puffed up her chest, staring at the small tawny she-cat with pride.

"And Harepaw, your mentor shall be Yelloweyes." Freezepaw almost gasped. Yelloweyes? He was so grumpy, and known for being hard on his apprentices. Harepaw was so gentle and kind, she would be overwhelmed! The she-cat opened her mouth to speak, but a gentle tap on her shoulder from her mentor shut her up quickly.

"Yelloweyes, you are known for your /unique/ training style and extreme bravery. I hope you will pass these traits onto your

apprentice." Harepaw leaped from the ledge, moving to touch noses with her mentor. Freezepaw didn't get a chance to read her eyes, she must be terrified! With a flick of her tail, the large gray leader dismissed the meeting, allowing the last round of cheering. Freezepaw's heart soared as the clan chanted her name. She was no longer Freezekit, a little baby playing with a mossball, she was now Freezepaw, an almost warrior. The other clans would know her name and cower. She was going to be the best warrior!

"Come on Freezepaw!" A gentle voice woke her out of her fantasy. Her sister stood before her, beckoning her to where her family waited. The pride in their parents eyes was evident. Behind the pride, maybe a bit of sorrow, the realization their children were growing up.

"Hey Little Flame" A paw swatted her over the head playfully. Little Flame, the name her brother gave her as a kit. He said it was for her fiery patches of fur, but everyone knew it was her excitable personality that named her. Freezepaw giggled, swatting back at her brother.

"One day, I'll be able to beat you up!" She hissed, her eyes full of fire.

"I'd like to see that." The golden tom purred, cuffing her ear. In the middle of camp, her brother's pelt shown beautifully. He was a handsome tom, a spitting image of their father. She-cats mooned over him often, but he was much too invested in his duty to be interested in them. Freezepaw didn't mind that, she wanted her brother to herself anyway. Suddenly, she was showered with warm licks. Her parents had made their way to her and her sister.

"Oh Freezepaw, Harepaw, I'm so proud of you." Their mother purred, her blue eyes shining. Her blue eyes seemed to be the only thing passed onto her children, and still, only one retained it. All the kits had fiery or golden pelts, resembling Sunheart's golden pelt. Harepaw and Lionroar had their father's beautiful green eyes. Freezepaw, however, had ice blue eyes that shone like her mother's. She liked to believe Cloudleap was glad at least one of her kits carried her traits.

"Mother!" Freezepaw hissed, recoiling from her caresses, "We aren't kits anymore."

"Right. I forgot." She purred, stifling a laugh, "You are big warriors now! Not my little babies." The last part seemed to carry real emotion. Cloudleap had mothered two litters. Her first, which contained Lionroar, didn't fair too well. Both of his sister's were stillborn, and his brother, Streamkit, died soon after from sickness. Father had told them Mother was never the same after that, and refused to have a litter for two sun-cycles. Finally, her second litter came, and this one brought her joy. Both of her kits survived their nursery days, and their fighting spirits would keep them going. Still, the grey and white queen watched them with the utmost care. Sunheart used to say she had never seen Cloudleap smile as much as when she did when her three kits played together.

"Well don't leave us out." A sweet voice purred. Freezepaw whipped around, facing her new mentor and Yelloweyes.

"But of course! We can't leave the mentor's out of this." Sunheart meowed, his chest still held high with pride. He ushered the rest of his family away, leaving room for the mentors to speak. Deerdapple cleared her throat, exchanging glances with Yelloweyes.

"Me and Yelloweyes have decided to show you the territory together. We think it would be uh-less awkward for the both of you that way." She mewed quietly. Freezepaw turned to her sister, her eyes lighting up. They wouldn't have to train completely seperate. The two she-cats were close since birth. They had never been separated until this point. The two shared a bond like no other.

"Oh, thank you Yelloweyes. Thank you Deerdapple." Harepaw purred, obviously containing her excitement.

"It's no problem. We should get going." Yelloweyes grumbled, his hoarse voice cracking. Harepaw started after her mentor, her tail held high. Freezepaw began to follow, her muzzle cracked into a smile, when a cold feeling rushed over her body. It spread down her spine, into her bones, shaking her teeth. A menacing stare. The she-cat was afraid to turn her head. It felt so dark, so... cold. Finally, she worked up the courage to turn. There, her ice blue eyes met a

pair of dark, slanted, demon-like, yellow eyes. She searched frantically for the owner of the eyes. Quailjump. The medicine cat. She never was that friendly, but why was she looking at her like that. As if she was slitting her throat with her eyes. What had she done?

"Freezepaw?" A soft voice woke her from her terror, "Are you okay?"

"Wha-oh Deerdapple, yeah....I'm okay..." She said, hesistantly, following quickly after her mentor. Anything to get away from that cold stare.

Chapter Two

"Slow down guys!" Harepaw yowled, frantically trying to keep up with the group. Her small size and short legs made her slower, especially since Deerdapple and Freezepaw possessed long legs. Yelloweyes grumbled, flashing a look to his apprentice.

"How will you keep up in battle if you can't even keep up on a walk?" The tawny she-cat pinned her ears against her head, averting her eyes. Fury raged through Freezepaw.

"Don't talk to my sister like that!" She spat. Deerdapple turned quickly, facing her fellow warrior and her apprentice. Just before the two were about to rip each-other, she interupted,

"Stop it. Both of you!" Deerdapple had a strong presence. One might see her as gentle and weak by her looks, but the lean she-cat could easily slit your throat while cutting you with her words. "Harepaw, come to the front with me. If you set the pace, you won't be left behind." She said, her voice back to it's normal sweetness. It was actually a brilliant idea. If Harepaw set the pace, everyone would walk at a slower pace. Deerdapple really was bright.

Soon, the group came to the edge of the tree-line. Lotusclan's territory sat in the middle of a giant marsh. The only dry places were the camp, which was nestled into the forest, and a few patches of sand. Lotusclan cats were born with large, webbed paws and thin pelts. These both allowed them to trudge through the mud, and swim through the deeper parts of the water with ease. Other clans struggled in their territory. They would get stuck in the mud or water, they could be stuck for days if a Lotusclanner didn't come to their aid. This kept them from too much harm. However, Mapleclan, which bordered on the forest part of the territory, had easy access to their camp and territory. That side of the territory was heavily guarded. At least three patrols were sent out every day, patrolling and marking. Mapleclan hadn't attacked in over a sun-cycle. However, this didn't deter the caution. On the left side of Mapleclan, lay Galeclan. Galeclan sat on an open moor. Freezepaw

never quite understood why someone would want to live in a place like that, susceptible to attack and weather. However. the Galeclan cats didn't seem to mind. Yet, beyond that, lay the final and fourth clan, Pineclan. Much like Mapleclan, Pineclan lay in a thick forest. But this clan, lay in a dark. muggy pine forest. Cats tended to avoid them, they were known for harsh personalities and sharp tempers to match their claws.

"Freezepaw? Do you remember why we don't protect our western border as heavily as our eastern?" Deerdapple suddenly asked.

"Oh! Uh-" She thought for a moment. What had she been taught? "Oh, because the other clans can't invade effectively through the western." She paused again, wrinking up her nose, "Those dry-paws can't handle a little mud!" Freezepaw's ice blue eyes sparkled with laughter. She exchanged looks with her sister, who had an equally amused look. Harepaw hid her feelings well. No one except Freezepaw could detect them.

"Correct." The light brown mentor said curtly. She dipped her head to Yelloweyes, who proceded to take the lead. Freezepaw's head tilted. What could Yelloweyes show her that Deerdapple couldn't? The dark-gray tom's ragged tail beckoned them all with him. Were they supposed to be silent? Freezepaw didn't want to find out.

"Everyone quiet now," Deerdapple hissed, "We are approaching the Overhang. We can see all of the clans from this spot. The other clans do not know this exists." That would explain the sudden silence. It was beautiful, looking out over the lands. The rolling hills of Galeclan, the vast trees of Mapleclan. It was like nothing she had ever seen before. They were blessed to even have this. What advantage this must give them over the other clans! It was amazing this even existed in the low, boggy lands of Lotusclan. The she-cat's eyes were so focused on the view she almost forgot to breathe. She definantly forgot as her patrol began to walk away without her.

They finished the rest of the tour thouroughly, showing the new apprentices each nook and cranny of the territory. Freezepaw made sure to memorize every inch. It was a very welcome change from the usual, boring views of the camp. Even when they did return, tired as she was, she longed to be back at that overhang, looking

out at the territories. Feeling the wind on her fur. She finally felt free. The young apprentice fell asleep that night dreaming of being on that overhang again. Her sister must have been so annoyed with all her fidgeting.